



PREPARATION FOR PROGRESSION & WORK EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES (FURTHER EDUCATION)

Originator: Nina Spencer/Suzanne Archer
Date: 16 April 2015
Approved by:
Type: Guidelines

Revised: 9 October 2019

1. Introduction

Leeds Arts University has a long tradition of developing artists and designers of the future. From the time students commence their chosen Further Education course, through Higher Education and/or employment students are being prepared to engage as professionals within the creative industries. Gaining an understanding of potential progression opportunities and work experience are essential parts of a students' learning. It is expected that staff and students will seek out opportunities for live briefs, competitions and exhibitions and invite visiting professionals to impart their knowledge and experience to add value to students' learning. Staff should engage with professional careers advice agencies to ensure students have the opportunity to explore the many different career opportunities available. These guidelines offer advice, which may be offered where appropriate, on work experience and preparations for progression and explain what students may expect as part of their main programme of study and other opportunities that are open to them.

2. Preparing for Progression and Work experience within the programme of study

Live Briefs

The term 'live brief' is used widely in the art and design sector to describe a brief which is delivered as part of a unit requiring the student designer or artist to produce work for a real life scenario. Live briefs are usually written in conjunction with a business or other organisation which require a creative solution of some kind. This might be producing a corporate identity for a client or providing some artwork (painting, sculpture, photograph etc.) for a business or organisation (e.g. restaurant, offices, public space etc.). Live briefs may be assessed as part of a unit and usually involves feedback from the client which can sometimes lead to some form of prize or commissioning of a student to undertake further work in their own time. Live briefs can help students develop their portfolios and improve their employability prospects. They create opportunities for students to test and validate their skills in a realistic work context, delivering a finished product on time, within budget and to an agreed specification. The briefs encourage development of interpersonal skills of persuasion, negotiation and presentation.

Preparation for progression or employment

As part of their qualification students are required to investigate career and progression routes within art and design.

Whilst primarily concerned with progression to higher education study, attention is also given to highlighting alternative routes to employment. Within a supporting enrichment programme, an external careers guidance agency provides a series of workshops and one to one guidance sessions to help students explore alternatives routes and make informed decisions about their progression aims. The workshop session include guidance and advice on CV writing, interview techniques and searching for jobs/apprenticeships.

A series of presentations and tutorials guide students through the UCAS application process and provide support for personal statement writing, the production of e-portfolios and interview preparation.

Student communication and presentation skills are continually developed through regular critiques and presentations. All students prepare a portfolio of work to demonstrate their creative skills and abilities within their chosen area of specialism. Mock interviews with staff from outside course areas provides the opportunity for students to further develop their skills within an interview context and receive valuable feedback prior to attending their interviews.

All final year students exhibit their work in the University 'End of year Show', which is attended by industry professionals, higher education staff and the general public. This provides a valuable experience in the curating of a group exhibition and presenting themselves and their work professionally, whether they are planning to progress to higher education or enter employment.

Visiting Professionals and Alumni

Visiting Professionals (VPs) are current industry practitioners and professionals who provide students with invaluable specialist knowledge and impart their experience through lectures, seminars or workshops. The VPs are normally invited to provide a lecture, seminar or workshop to provide specialist knowledge or skills that are directly relevant to the course. This might include introducing students to a specialist skill, talking to students about how their own career developed, or simply showing students their professional work and providing 'top tips' on gaining employment or becoming self-employed. VPs provide an invaluable context to students learning.

Visiting Alumni provide the opportunity for students to gain an insight into how their careers may progress within their chosen specialism. Alumni who are at various stages in their career development are invited in to discuss their practice and how their careers are developing in the creative sector.

Competitions

There are many national competitions for student artists and designers and course teams often encourage their students to enter. When appropriate, a competition can be utilised as part of the scheduled learning and as such would be assessed as course work. However other competition opportunities may be identified which students may undertake in their own time. Entering competitions can be very beneficial as these are often similar to live briefs, defined by professionals within the industry, and often offer prizes which may be in cash, provide exhibiting opportunity or opportunities to work with a design agency. Competitions enable students to receive feedback on their work from industry, celebrate their achievements, and enrich their CV's.

Work shadowing

Work shadowing is encouraged to help students gain insight/real world experience of their chosen career. It is usually short term and undertaken during holiday periods. This self-directed research allows students to independently choose aspirational and relevant practitioners relevant to their intended career path.

3. Opportunities outside the programme of study

Creative Networks & Exhibition Programme

Creative Networks (CN) is Leeds Arts University's major professional events programme through which students from all disciplines may benefit from meeting and hearing about the career paths of successful creative industry professionals. CN is open to not only our own students but also alumni, creative industry professionals and the general public who have a passion for the arts. The speakers are high profile and in the past have included David Shrigley, Wayne Hemmings, Jamal Edwards, Jimmy Choo, Catherine de Monchaux and Erik Kessels.

The Creative Network programme is complemented by the University's exhibitions programme which provides students with the opportunity to view a range of contemporary art and practice.